

Australian Garden HISTORY

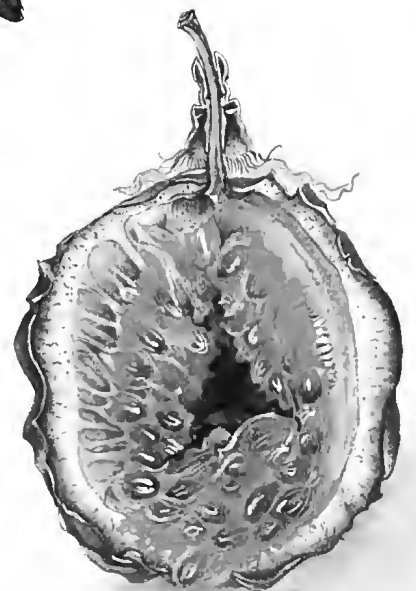
Vol. 18 No. 2 September/October 2006



*Painting
Australia's
botanic
history*



*Historic plants that
have been branded
weeds
... what should be
their fate?*



MISSION STATEMENT

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.

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Cover: Botonic art submitted for this year's Art of Botanical Illustration 2006 Eighth Biennial Exhibition (see story page 18).
Possifloro monicota by Dalores Skowronski-Mollan, and
Possionfruit by Joan Mason.



From the chair

Historic Heritage Places Report could set back conservation 30 years

In April 2005 the Australian Garden History Society along with other organisations with an interest in heritage welcomed the announcement by the Federal Treasurer that there would be a Productivity Commission Inquiry into the 'Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places'. This was seen as an opportunity to influence the perception of gardens as heritage and to argue for support and positive change to the current heritage system. Members of the NMC prepared and presented submissions to the Inquiry.

However, the draft Report was met with disapproval, if not outrage, by heritage organisations. While the final Report (April 2006) was an improvement, a disturbing key element remained: it privileges short-term private interest over long-term community interest, including future generations. If the recommendations are implemented, it would enable owners of private properties to apply for the removal or reduction of heritage controls through a 'negotiated agreement' where there are alleged unreasonable costs to



AGHS at old Fryerstown

their current owners arising from listing. Effectively, the listing of privately owned properties would be subject to the forces of the real estate market. At our last NMC teleconference, our Vice Chair Max Bourke, who spent 23 years in senior Federal Government positions including founding Director of the Australian Heritage Commission and CEO of the Australia Council, passionately spoke of how the acceptance of this report could 'set back conservation in this country 30 years, over 30 years'.

If the Productivity Commission's Report is adopted, it could rapidly accelerate the loss of heritage places across Australia.

A further concern is that the Productivity Commission Report recommendations appear to load local government with an impossible burden. Australia ICOMOS has observed that the final report is disappointingly silent on many key financial aspects of the heritage system that it was expected to address, particularly the level of funding needed to provide the resources at all levels of government to implement the Commission's recommendations. Submissions to the Productivity Commission Inquiry clearly demonstrated the considerable resources needed by the heritage sector, although this is not addressed in either the recommendations or the body of the report.

On another, pleasurable note, the heritage of the cultural landscape of Fryerstown, an historic goldfields town near Castlemaine in Victoria, was the focus for a most interesting event organised by Lynne Landy, Jackie Courmadias, Chris Reid and members of the Victorian Branch. Lynne and John Landy have a great attachment to this small town. On behalf of all our members, I was delighted to welcome John and Lynne as our Joint Patrons in the Burke and Wills Hall (see story page 9), which is a remarkable reminder of the 19th century civic pride in country towns that grew around the quest for gold.

Gardens around Adelaide have featured in recent journals in anticipation of our conference this year. Following our Annual General Meeting we have allocated time for a member forum at the conference. The NMC would welcome members' considered thoughts on issues that are important to you and our Society.

Colleen Morris

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WEEDS *versus*

What happens when a plant deemed to be historically significant is also branded a weed? It's a dilemma that faces gardener, historian and weed-fighter alike? Here two experts seemingly on either side of the garden fence answer four questions on the subject.

For more than two centuries of European settlement Australian gardens have benefited from rich horticultural importations.

But the push to re-create the garden styles and plantings of Europe has also brought many species that have proven to be far more weedy than could have ever been imagined.

Certainly few could have guessed that those willows planted around ornamental lakes and by rivers would have ever become a problem. Or that the Monterey cypress grown around properties to protect against wind could have caused concern. Or that hawthorns would ever be viewed as anything but the basis of superb hedges.

But today those and many other plants, including specimens now considered part of our gardening heritage, are being branded weeds.

For instance, it is estimated that two-thirds of the nearly 300 plants known to have established themselves as weeds in the wild between 1971 and 1995 were introduced as ornamentals.

For the garden historian, the owners of old gardens and those who are currently battling to rid Australia of the weed menace, there can be giant dilemmas.

When is a weed a weed, and when is it a heritage plant worth preserving? Just how should we react to plants of historic interest that have more recently been classed as weeds?

Here two experts on different sides of the fence – one a weed fighter and the other a garden historian – offer their thoughts in a quick poll.

For Kate Blood, project leader of Weed Alert Rapid Response with Victoria's Department of Primary Industries, weeds must be eradicated. For author and historian Peter Cuffley, it is important that we preserve our garden heritage.

Hopefully their answers will help some of us make up our own minds

WEEDS Q & A

1 Is there a place in the Australian landscape, especially in gardens of historic significance, for historic plants that have been deemed to be weeds?

Kate Blood: Some garden plants used since Europeans settled Australia have subsequently become invasive and impact on agricultural and natural areas. If a plant is considered or declared a serious weed, there is a moral or legislative obligation to remove it to reduce those impacts. An old practice does not mean it is still an appropriate practice today.

Peter Cuffley: There are various situations where such plants are important in historic gardens or heritage landscapes. *Schinus areira*, the pepper tree, is a significant element in and around towns such as Maldon in Central Victoria. Another example is *Crataegus monogyna*, the single-seed hawthorn, in long established hedges in the Westbury-Deloraine area in Tasmania.

2 What should be the criteria as to whether an historically significant plant that has been deemed to be a weed stays or goes?

Kate Blood: If a plant has been declared under legislation and there are legal requirements for its removal, then it should be removed. If it is not declared but is still invasive, the threat that it poses to the local area and assets, the ease with which it can be spread from a garden, and the degree of difficulty to remove it once it escapes, need to be considered.

Peter Cuffley: A tree such as *Pinus radiata*, the Monterey or radiata pine, needs to be assessed within a particular locality. The elimination of unwanted seedlings can mean that established specimens might remain. The Irish strawberry tree, *Arbutus unedo*, requires similar vigilance. If any risk can be managed, then a significant plant might be retained.

HISTORY



Pinus radiata ... once these trees were sought for providing windbreaks around homesteads but now they are classed as potential weeds in same areas.

3 Is there a case for replacing such a plant with another of the same species when it has died or been removed because of poor condition?

Kate Blood: Safer alternatives should be considered when replacing an invasive species. To maintain the character of the garden or landscape, choose safer alternatives with similar growth characteristics.

Peter Cuffley: When a plant is assessed as being historically important and does not present a high risk as a declared weed, there is an argument for replacement with one of the same species. Regional and local conditions are important factors.

4 Do you have any other thoughts on the matter?

Kate Blood: Each situation should be assessed individually. Weed advice should be sought from weed experts including state government officers. Seek advice from horticulturists and experts in historic site management. Be aware of weed legislation covering the area.

Peter Cuffley: A plant that can be an invasive weed in areas with high rainfall and better soils often presents a very low risk in dry inland regions. An example is *Acer pseudoplatanus*, the sycamore maple, which is a serious problem in the Dandenong Ranges of Victoria and other areas with similar conditions.

Ones that could worry

Some of the common plants listed below are often found in old gardens. They are also ones that have the potential to become problem weeds in Australia

African boxthorn	Honey locust tree
African olive	Lombardy poplar
Aleppo pine	Montpellier broom
American cotton palm	Muraya
Arum lily	Olive
Asparagus fern	Pepper tree
Athel pine	Pink pampas grass
Black willow	Poinciana
Box elder	Prickly acacia
Broad leaf pepper tree	Prickly pear (common)
Broad-leaved privet	Primrose willow
Broom (Cytisus spp.)	Pussy willow
Broom (Genista spp.)	Queen palm, Cocos palm
Broom (Scotch)	Radiata pine
Camphor laurel	Small-leaved privet
Castor oil plant	Snakeweeds
Chinese rain tree	Spanish heath
Coastal tea tree	Spotted gum
Common thornapple	Sweet briar
Cotoneaster	Sweet pittosporum
Desert ash	Sydney golden wattle
Golden shower	Tree-of-heaven
Golden wreath wattle	Weeping white broom
Guava	Weeping willow
Hawthorn	White Spanish broom
Heather	White cedar
Himalayan raintree	White poplar
Holly	White teak

The making of Mt Annan

Two key participants recall the heady days of the conception and birth of one of Australia's most ambitious botanic gardens in recent times.

The worth of garden history is lessened if those who witness a garden's birth and development fail to record the progress.

So much of Australian garden history has been lost for this very reason.

But thankfully this won't be the case with the Mount Annan Botanic Garden, that treasure trove of Australian plants near Campbelltown, south-west of Sydney.

Thanks to some forward thinking by two key participants, a joint account of the heady days leading up to Mount Annan's remarkable creation and opening in 1988 has been put together.

The account is the work of Edwin Wilson, who in the years before the garden's opening was responsible for media and promotion, and Dr Barbara Briggs who was then Senior Assistant Director (Scientific) and deputy to the Director and at times Acting Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens.

It has come about because after his retirement in 2003, Ed Wilson came across a number of dated references leading up to Mount Annan's opening and decided something should be recorded for history.

He contacted Barbara Briggs and the pair, now both Honourary Research Associates of Sydney's Botanic Gardens Trust, put together an account for "anyone in the future who may wonder how Mount Annan Botanic Garden came to pass".

It examines how the NSW Government came to allocate 400 hectares of dairy pasture and land formerly owned by the Tharawal Aboriginal people as a display of Australia's floral diversity and will be kept in the records of the garden for researchers of the future.

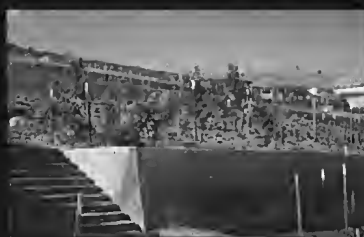
Although still relatively new, the Mount Annan Garden is fast becoming both a magnificent and extensive

landscape and a showcase for Australian flora.

As the report, *Birth of a Garden*, records, the first idea for a garden such as Mount Annan belonged to Joseph Henry Maiden, director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens from 1896 to 1924. He dreamed of an arboretum (botanic tree garden) somewhere west of Sydney in the lower rainfall area, as it was so much harder to grow some of the Western Australian species in the higher rainfall area of the Sydney Botanic Gardens.

But not until the early 1980s did there appear any likelihood of it becoming reality. And the catalyst was a strong professional relationship that had developed between Dr Lawrie Johnson, the Director of the Sydney gardens, and the then NSW Premier Neville Wran.

According to the two authors of the account, Johnson worked on the





philosophy that whenever he and Wran met he would never push for specific projects but would rather set about building a rapport with the Premier.

“The Premier was therefore always happy to chat with him,” they observe. “It was a time of great interest in growing native plants and many people had been saying that the Gardens should have a place to grow more Australian plants.”

And the time was perfect. In 1888, on the first centenary of European

settlement in eastern Australia, the Government of New South Wales had established Centennial Park. So a garden of Australian plants seemed a perfect addition for the bicentennial of Australia.

When Premier Wran became aware of the interest in such a garden, he reacted quickly. Invited to launch a 1984 Spring in the Gardens festival, his department enquired about plans for a new garden and if the Gardens “would have anything to announce” at the launch.

From the Mount Annan Botanic Garden views open up across the landscape.
Picture: Jaime Plaza

There was no time to dither. Seizing the opportunity and buoyed by the Premier’s interest, Barbara Briggs and Gardens staff determined to get something underway before the Premier’s planned visit just a few weeks later.

In lightning time (this was in the days before mobile phones existed)



FADING VIEWS OF MOUNT ANNAN HISTORY: *These pre-digital age pictures, some of the few taken prior to Mount Annan’s opening in 1988, are already beginning to fade from existence. They show the setting for the Garden and depict a time of great endeavour and excitement for those who shared the vision. Photos: Barbara Briggs, Steve Corbett and Ed Wilson*

she and Don Blaxell (Assistant Director, Living Collections) had cut through a mass of red tape, spoken to other departments and identified and inspected four possible sites with Gardens experts.

With the deadline fast approaching, a unanimous decision was made on site four.

"All were very impressed, as the best had obviously been saved to last," recall the authors. "The land had earlier been acquired by Government as part of a 'scenic hills' green belt, and was vacant except for a riding school at the northern end and a small dairy. This one was obviously the superior site, for its physical beauty, accessibility, size, variety of landscapes, and was mostly cleared (with pockets of Cumberland Plain woodland), and with ready access to a water supply."

With time so tight, Barbara Briggs drafted her report in the car on the way back to the city, incorporating comments from her colleagues. And in a few days costings had been produced.

In the mad rush leading up to the announcement, in what she describes as the most exciting week in her professional life, Barbara and supporters had pulled all the loose threads together.

And on the morning of Saturday 22 September 1984, Neville Wran announced that some 400-plus hectares of land near Campbelltown would be the place for the establishment of a native botanic garden and arboretum that would be open for the Bicentennial in 1988.

"The jaws of management dropped, as they were flat out with a projected Mount Tomah opening for the same deadline," report the authors.

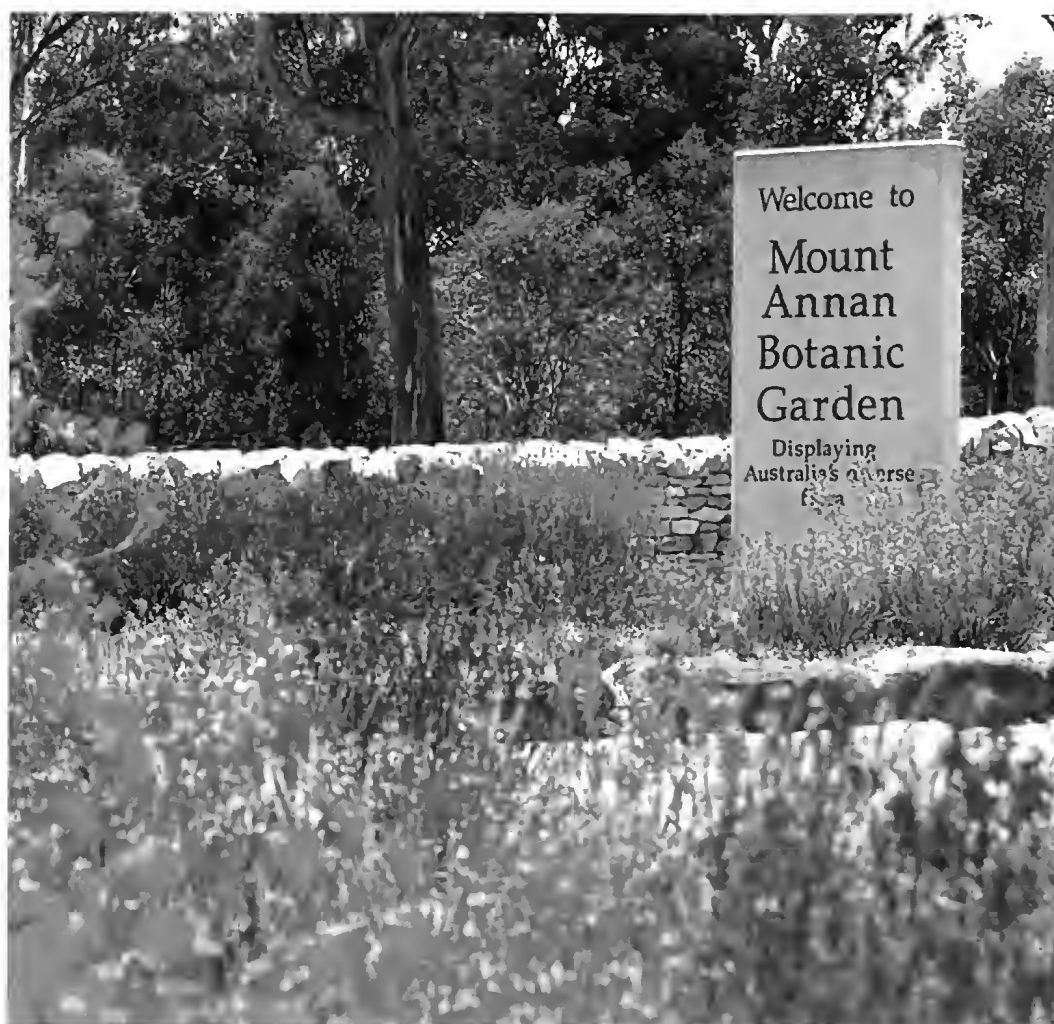
While the project had been costed at \$10 million, Barbara asked for \$6 million, fearing too large an ask would be rejected. By the opening, the project had come in at \$10 million.

A little over a year after the Premier's announcement, the first open day at Mount Annan was held and planting quickly began, roads were installed and dams dug.

Then came the opening. "It was hot and windy on the day of the official opening by the Duke and Duchess of York on Sunday 2 October 1988," recall the authors. "Their presence assured publicity and there was the planting of a lilly-pilly on the lawn near the northern-most lake, as well as an official luncheon in an adjacent large marquee. Environment reporter Joe

BELOW: Today the hard early work has paid off and Mount Annan Botanic Garden is a favourite for those who love Australian plants.

Picture: Simone Cottrell



Mount Annan Botanic Garden timeline

1820s: Land purchased as part of Glenlee estate by magistrate William Howe.

1850s: Glenlee acquired by James Fitzpatrick whose descendants ran a dairy farm until 1978.

1975: Land designated as part of a Scenic Protection Zone by Macarthur Development Board.

1970s: A riding school established from late 1970s to early 80s on land leased from the Macarthur Development Board.

1984: NSW Government allocates 400ha for native botanic garden to be administered by Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust.

1988: Mount Annan opens on October 2.

Glascott, in an article in the Sydney Morning Herald, said we'd all been present at the "birth of one of the great gardens of the world", given ongoing funding and continuity.

"The lead-up to this launch had really been an amazing and exhausting period; we have had the privilege of working at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and have witnessed the birth of such a massive baby garden," conclude the authors.

The authors' full report of the unfolding of the Mount Annan project can be found on the website of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney – www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au.



Mount Annan Botanic Garden at dusk. Picture: Jaime Plaza



Picture: Colleen Morris

Hall of history

Inside it looks much like a hundred other Mechanics Institutes around Australia but the 1863-built Burke and Wills Mechanics Institute in goldfields Fryerstown, Victoria, has – as its name indicates – fascinating historical connections. It was in Fryerstown that the co-leader of Burke and Willis expedition, Robert O'Hara Burke, had earlier served as Superintendent of Police for the Castlemaine district. After the expedition's tragic conclusion, locals raised £300 to build the hall as a memorial. Each Australia Day weekend an antique fair is held here to raise funds to maintain the hall.

The Baron's sad last years

*Hailed as one of the great botanists and plant collectors, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller's place in Australian horticultural history is assured. But as Nina Crone reports after reviewing the third and most pertinent volume of a series of his edited correspondence, *Regardsfully Yours*, the German-born botanist never recovered from the hurt of losing his most cherished role.*

Once started, I could not put this book down. A weekend disappeared as over 700 pages of letters from Mueller, to Mueller, about Mueller totally absorbed me in the last 20 years of a remarkable man deprived of his passion – the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. Previous perceptions of the man changed forever as I came to see a sensitive, hurt man, rather than a bitter man.

In letters penned on Christmas Day 1876, 1879 and 1891 Mueller expresses feelings about his “dismissal” – perhaps not unexpected for a lonely, aging bachelor to feel depressed on days when family celebrations were occupying other people:

Overall the letters portray a man of humanity, culture, gargantuan energy and a world-view of scientific research. Letters to a niece offer career advice and thanks for home-made gifts, a letter to a West Australian policeman recalls

an expedition in 1877, there are letters of condolence over deaths of wives, husbands and a childhood friend, letters from collectors of “fungi” and “algae” and rather coy letters to Jacob Agardh in Sweden who wanted photographs of the women who collected seaweeds for him.

Von Mueller's broader cultural interests are evident through invitations – from Rose Grainger to “little Percy's concert”, from the Melbourne School of Music, from the Artists Society and from the German Society on his 70th birthday.

Letters threaded their way across the world to Joseph Hooker and William Thiselton-Dyer in England, to Jean Muller, Franz Stephani and Casimir de Candolle in Geneva, Paolo Dattari in Florence, Edouard Bornet in Paris, Asa Gray in Boston, Thomas Cheeseman in Auckland, Eugene Hilgard in California, Eduard von Regel in St Petersburg. Others went to farmers in outback Australia – to the Barrier Range near Broken Hill, to Bourke, Geraldton, Eucla.

A meticulous public servant, Mueller sought “permission to work at his doctor's house in Victoria Parade”. As his 66th birthday approached, he hoped “to continue service as Government Botanist” and even had “the honour to report, that last evening I met with an accident by falling from a tramcart . . .”.

AGHS members will find some correspondence of particular interest: to Thomas Jephcott, whose arboretum has been visited by ACT Branch, from the Reverend Hagenauer whose Ramahyuck Mission bordered Strathfieldsaye in Gippsland, to the Field Naturalists about a proposed change of name and the future of what is now Wilsons Promontory National Park – “. . . we could not possibly induce the Government to cede so large an area for that purpose as the whole of Wilsons promontory . . . an application might be made . . . for withdrawing from selection the best of the Waratah-Vallies in Eastern

A MAN OF LETTERS

It was once estimated that it was not unusual for Ferdinand von Mueller to write 3000 letters a year, as well as hundreds of articles and botanical pamphlets. In his 20 years as director of Melbourne's botanic gardens from 1853 he toiled diligently to keep them running despite inadequate staff and lack of water resources. It is generally agreed he lost his directorship because he was considered a man of science and not interested enough in the aesthetic side of the gardens. Although deprived of the position, he remained state botanist and did not suffer a pay cut. But his pride had suffered enormously. A kindly, religious and frugal man, he never married and worked up until his death in October 1896.



PAST IMPRESSION: A sketch of Ferdinand von Mueller aged 68 that was made on blotting paper in 1893 by J.A. Pantou. Reprinted courtesy of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. BELOW: Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens today owe much to their one-time director.

Gippsland, also all places in which large cataracts or cascade exist . . . Places at Mt Baw Baw, the Buffalo-Ranges and towards Cape Otway might also be protected."

In a letter to Georgina King, Mueller makes a significant observation about Charles Moore, director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens: " 'Altho' we held very opposite views on the objects of botanic gardens, he always acted honourably

towards me. English gardening in an Egyptian clime can only be carried on at fabulous expense . . . I never had any water for extensive lawns and mosaic or carpet flower-beds."

Emeritus Professor Rod Home and his team have pursued Mueller correspondence world-wide for 15 years and it has only been possible to publish a fraction of what they have collected. Their work is superbly documented with easily followed cross references, footnotes, translations, calendar, bibliography, biographical register and index (botanical and general). But it is the balance of the letters selected that is so impressive in creating a picture of arguably Australia's greatest man of science.

The three volumes of *Regardfully Yours* do not come cheaply and will not be everyone's choice of reading but they certainly deserve consideration. All bibliophiles will find a way of acquiring them. Many people already car-pool or shower with a friend, so why not begin a shared library with *Regardfully Yours* – or at least make sure your local library has the three volumes.

Regardfully Yours

Selected Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller

Vol. III: 1876-1896

Edited by RW Home, AM Lucos, Soro Moroske, DM Sinkoro, JH Voigt and Moniko Wells

Peter Long, Bern, 2006

For price, contact your local Botanic Gardens Shop or favourite bookseller, or www.DAdirect.com



Picture: Tony Fawcett

A LIFE OF PLANTS

- Born in Rostock, Germany, Ferdinand von Mueller arrived in Australia for health reasons in 1848 after studying pharmacy and becoming a Doctor of Philosophy.
- A born investigator, he scoured Victoria from corner to corner and explored northern Australia with the A.C. Gregory expedition in 1855-57.
- The first Botanist of Victoria (a position he held for 43 years until his death) and the inaugural president of the Royal Society of Victoria, he was director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens 1853-73.
- Through his career, he was awarded many honours by European governments and was knighted by Queen Victoria and made a Baron by the King of Wurtemberg.

Reading more into cemeteries



They might mark the final resting place of the departed but cemeteries have much more to tell us, from the way our ancestors lived to even the way they gardened and the plants they liked to grow. Landscape consultant CATHERINE BREW, a specialist in cemetery research, offers a guide to unlocking their secrets.

**Illustration and photography by
Catherine Brew and Tony Fawcett**



Most people recognise that cemeteries record the names of our ancestors, but are they aware that cemeteries

have a great capacity to reveal not only how people died, but how they lived?

All cemeteries including “younger” or “active” cemeteries are valuable as

social documents of history that document changes in taste, custom and design.

Not only is our nation’s development and social history reflected in the written detail on a monument, but it also lies within the vegetation, the layout of the cemetery, the materials used, monument design and the use of symbolism.

As cultural landscapes, these burial places provide a tangible and evocative link to past communities.

Before we go any further, I’d like to explain what I mean by the word “cemetery”. A cemetery may be a designed cultural landscape, laid out in a formal or informal design with paths, driveways, denominational sections, plantings and buildings, such as large cemeteries like Rookwood Necropolis or Waverley Cemetery, both in Sydney.

However, we also use the term when talking about a churchyard, a family cemetery on private land and even a lone grave on a country property.



Remember too that the term is used when dealing with cemeteries where no headstones are present. The bodies lie in-situ but all above-ground markers have long gone, either through weathering, vandalism, fire, damage by livestock or, increasingly, by development.

Reading the cultural landscape of cemeteries really does give a richer understanding of lives gone before us.

In 2004, I visited with colleagues a family cemetery on a property near Bombala in the southern tablelands of NSW. Before the visit, the only information we had was that there were four graves and that the epitaphs were partially legible.

The country was rough and rocky and it took us about 30 minutes to four-wheel drive from the main road to the graves. As we came over a large

rise and descended to a dry creek bed, we noticed a series of dry stone walls, unlike any other fences we'd observed on the way in. Noting them, we crossed the creek bed and continued to a flat area behind a large group of trees to find four marble headstones. There were no other obvious signs of human occupation.

Since Christian graves tend to face east to meet the rising sun and on country properties they face the homestead, we searched in the direction of the graves.

At the base of a large mature willow tree 200 metres to the east, we located the remains of a brick chimney. We now knew that there had been a building at that location at some time.

As we questioned the landowner about the stone walls we'd seen earlier, he began to talk about itinerant

Chinese, who he believed had built the walls in the 1850s in return for food and board. He also mentioned that the old Sydney to Bega Road had passed near this location. We surmised about whether the building ruins had in fact been an inn on the old road and that perhaps the Chinese workers had stayed there. Lastly, the earliest date of death on the headstones was 1886. This was significant because that same headstone included the name of the stonemason; Flanagan and Anderson,



Chinese, who he believed had built the walls in the 1850s in return for food and board. He also mentioned that the old Sydney to Bega Road had passed near this location. We surmised about whether the building ruins had in fact been an inn on the old road and that perhaps the Chinese workers had stayed there. Lastly, the earliest date of death on the headstones was 1886. This was significant because that same headstone included the name of the stonemason; Flanagan and Anderson,



Above: What surrounds graves can provide a guide to garden fashions of the time.

Sydney, Waverley. We could then ascertain that in 1886 the Sydney to Bega road had been in a good enough condition to transport a marble headstone all the way from Sydney to this location, a six-hour trip in the car today. So from four simple graves in a paddock, we left with a much richer picture of how people had possibly lived at this location.

The ability of cemeteries to provide valuable insight into past communities continues to fascinate me.

Cemeteries also give us insight into personal relationships, particularly on country properties, where it is unusual to find workers buried in the same cemetery as landowners. Where they are together, we might deduce that their personal relationship was particularly meaningful.

Furthermore, burial patterns also indicate the intentions of the family at

the time of burial. Where a grave is found in the centre of a large fenced area, we assume that the family only ever intended to have one burial.

Where a grave is located in the corner of a fenced area, it is more than likely that the family intended to use the cemetery for future generations.

In 2005, I visited the grave of a seven-year-old boy buried in the corner of a large fenced area (see picture on previous page), indicating they had planned future burials. An abandoned homestead lay within sight of the grave and I wondered if the death of the child had been too much for the family to bear and whether they had left the land soon afterwards.

There are many cases where vegetation has assisted in the interpretation of a cemetery. Although, it may not reveal the whole story behind a cemetery, it often adds greatly to our understanding of a site. In some cases it may be the vital key.

I know of one site in western NSW where the presence of bulbs has helped confirm the existence of a cemetery. Often in the absence of parish burial records, it is difficult to prove the location of a cemetery that has no above-ground markers. In this case, older members of the community remembered a cemetery in a fenced parcel of land that had no grave markers. Old parish maps indicated a cemetery in the vicinity, but the exact location could not be confirmed. The deciding factor was found on site. The fenced area was dotted with bulbs, whilst the adjacent paddocks, like any other paddock, were filled with some scrub and native grasses. The cemetery land was easily distinguished as something different and became the basis for further research.

The more you delve into cemeteries, the more you realise the wide variety of information they divulge. It really is

very expansive. Epitaphs include strong religious sentiments, attachments of love, loss, grieving, death and the hereafter.

Unusual examples of art and craft found in the design of many monuments portray symbolic 19th Century views on death, often quite different from current customs. The symbolism found on monuments can reveal the teachings of the Church and the family's attitudes at the time.

Angels are a common symbol of spirituality. They guard the grave, guide the soul and pray for the soul in purgatory.

A massive granite headstone in a predominantly sandstone cemetery may indicate the wealth of that family. Cemeteries with pre-civil registry burials may be the only place in Australia where a person's life is recorded.

Patterns of European progress and settlement are documented in cemeteries, as are major events in a local community like epidemics, agricultural booms and busts, mining disasters and war. Further, by analysing the death rates of different denominations, we see strong connections between class and religion.

Why Catholics died younger

Next time you walk around an old cemetery, you will note that generally Catholics died younger than Presbyterians.

Catholics were working class and usually employed in more physically demanding jobs.

Presbyterians, on the other hand, were upper class and more likely to hold office/clerical type jobs.

Consequently, the minimal strain on their bodies could have led to their longer lives.



ABOVE: Although trees and other vegetation in a cemetery might not reveal the whole story, they often add greatly to our understanding of a site and can sometimes provide a vital key to the past.

Essentially, cemeteries have an extraordinary ability to help us understand Australia's past.

The history found in them is a valuable and insightful ingredient in shaping our cultural identity, and should be cherished. By understanding and appreciating the value of what we find in cemeteries, we are in a better position to move into the future with confidence.



ABOVE: The clues to unlocking the secrets of our cemeteries can be found all around.

Catherine Brew is a landscape architect who specialises in cultural landscapes, especially cemeteries. She has worked on a range of cultural heritage projects within Sydney for the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (DEC), including Gaat Island; Fort Denison; Barrenjoey Lighthouse; the Quarantine Station; as well as surveying a number of cemeteries in NSW. She also runs her own heritage landscape consultancy and has been part of a consultancy team which won two Planning Institute Australia Awards for Planning Excellence – NSW (2003) and National (2004).

Drawing on the past

Award-winning artist Lauren Black gains inspiration from the greats of the world of botanical art in a groundbreaking new work

Lauren Black might be young in years but sit her at an easel and she can seemingly turn back the historical clock in botanical art. It's as if this Hobart-based artist is in touch with Australia's great botanical artists of old.

Lauren, the winner of the inaugural 2004 Margaret Flockton Award for excellence in scientific botanical illustration, gained acclaim when a collection of six of her works were reproduced on a set of porcelain plates that were gifted to HRH Crown Prince Fredrick and his Tasmanian-born wife Princess Mary of Denmark.

The paintings on the plates, which were crafted by internationally recognised ceramist Les Blakebrough, were in the style of many early Australian botanical works, depicting six of Tasmania's distinctive plants.

Now Lauren has scored another first with the watercolours being released in what is the first volume of its kind to be published in Tasmania. Called *Tasmanian Flora*, the fine art Gilcee reproductions, done in the style of the great flora publications and limited to just 200 copies, have been printed on the highest grade conservatory paper using archival inks and presented in a handmade buckram covered solander box.

For Lauren, a Ballarat-born artist who set off in life to become a classical pianist but was lured away by a love of the outdoors and technical art, the works have been a giant labour of love.

All the plants are endemic to Tasmania, with several, such as *Lomatia tasmanica*, being threatened species. "I think I am only the second person to do a botanical painting of this plant (the first was Margaret Stones in the *Endemic Flora of Tasmania* volumes)," says Lauren.

To tap into the style she sought, Lauren, a botanic artist for 10 years (she began after doing a course with much lauded botanic artist Jenny Phillips at the Botanic Gardens Melbourne) and a curator of art exhibitions, spent much time researching historical works from Tasmania's heritage collections (artworks, plant specimens, botanical texts).

"There have been some wonderful painters, botanists and collectors that are significant in Australia's botanical history that have spent time in Tasmania," she says, "and exploring their botanical contributions to the shaping of Australia's history is fascinating and inspiring (e.g. R.C. Gunn, Archer, Labillardiere, Hooker, Brown, Curtis, Margaret Stones). She

also studied Sir Joseph Banks' *Floralegium* collection and published works by the Bauer brothers and Celia Rosser.

"I set myself the challenge to meet these same standards of archival reproduction and presentation that had been done before me," says Lauren. "Being the first person to think about and bring into realisation a volume in Tasmania has been very exciting and rewarding."

Today Lauren jokes that it feels as if she spent 10 years completing the series but admits it was probably about six weeks per painting. However, she is adamant that new challenges and the beauty and serenity of Tasmania have already restored her passion for botanical art. She and her partner moved to Hobart in the late 1990s after coming to the conclusion that Melbourne was just too big and busy.

"The wilderness here is spectacular and I love being able to go out and explore and spend time in the mountains and on the coast," she says. "The fantastic thing about Hobart is that it comes almost to your doorstep. I live in South Hobart and have spectacular views of the mountain – it can be climbed in a day from our back door."

Lauren thrives on Tasmania's uniqueness, and its unusual plants. "I love the history and the sense of exploration that exists here. There are times when you feel like you're the first person to explore a rugged mountain or deep valley. You get a real sense for what the first explorers and collectors must have felt."

When not exploring, Lauren can generally be found in her North Hobart studio where she daily works intensely for about five hours. And when not working she is usually thinking about work.

She suspects what she is doing now would have been just as demanding as the sort of career she once envisaged in classical music. "The long hours required and fine observation needed have a lot in common with classical music," she reasons.

But there are less arduous moments, too, such as when she was able to meet the Danish royals when they visited Tasmania ("they're a very relaxed couple") – *Tony Fawcett*

Lauren's limited edition Tasmanian Flora portfolio can be bought by contacting her on 0428 514 215 or Lauren@BotanicalFineArt.com. The cost is \$3575.00 (including GST and freight in Australia).



In famous footsteps

Botanical artist Lauren Black in her Hobart studio (above) and sections of three of her Tasmanian Flora works – *Lomatia tasmanica*, *Brachyglottis brunonis* (inset left) and *Eucalyptus coccifera* (inset above). Lauren sees herself as following in the great tradition of Australian botanical artists.



Our botanic bonanza

The camera has done much to progress the depiction of botanical specimens but in many ways the role of the botanical artist is still as important as ever.



Passiflora monicota
by Dolores
Skowronski-Mallon.

While a camera often presents a fuller picture, a piece of botanical art can pare down a specimen to its bare essentials, providing just the right selection of detail for the viewer.

For this reason, and the fact that botanical art is often plain pleasing to look at, the medium has diminished little in popularity since the days when Sir Joseph Banks portrayed our flora.

Australia is lucky to have some of the world's finest botanical art, new and old, in the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

Regularly new works are added to this collection, with some being chosen from the Art of Botanical Illustration Biennial Exhibition. The eighth biennial exhibition, presented by the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and the botanical illustrators' sub-committee, is being held in November in the RBG's Gallery space in Domain House Gallery, Dallas Brooks Drive, opposite the National Herbarium.

This year international artist Pandora Sellars, who has participated in many British and overseas exhibitions and has work displayed at the Natural History Museum, UK, and The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, will be the special guest.

Entrants have the chance to compete for the Celia Rosser Medal and also to have their work selected

for the State Botanic Collection, held at the nearby National Herbarium of Victoria. All works are for sale.

When: November 11-26, daily 10am-5pm at Domain House Gallery, Dallas Brooks Drive, South Yarra 3141 (enquires: Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004).



How did you come to be National Treasurer?

I responded to the plea for a new National Treasurer on the off chance that the Society might be short of applicants: there being no other I became Treasurer in October 2004, having had no prior role with any AGHS committee.

You have been an accountant for some time?

I became an accountant (CPA) at the tender age of 41, working for 11 years in a suburban practice and subsequently working with a former client.

How long have you been an AGHS member?

Although this is my first official role with AGHS, my wife Fran and I have been members since 1982, active for the last 15 years at working bees, attending lectures and garden visits.

We attended our first conference in 2000 and found it to be a most enjoyable experience. Our initial interest in working bees was sparked by a report in *The Age* newspaper on the first Turkeith working bee (1987).

Some years later, with our two girls old enough to help as well, we volunteered for our first working bee,

FIGURES, FABULOUS GARDENS & THAT WARM FUZZY FEELING

An informal chat with NMC National Treasurer Malcolm Faul

out of recognition of the very significant commitment of custodians of historic gardens to maintaining their garden in the manner to which it would like to be accustomed. Not only did we derive the warm and fuzzy feeling of helping and gain considerable enjoyment from the conviviality of both workers and owners, but our city-bred daughters gained a glimpse of rural life and a love of the Australian landscape.

We are still regular working bee participants – I am often seen wielding the mattock to remove recalcitrant suckers and saplings at various properties. In fact the Castlemaine weekends (Buda and Tute's Cottage) have now become a fixture in our calendar – it is my responsibility to organise the accommodation for myself and the ladies

How did you get interested in history?

We both have a lifelong interest in Australian history; mine fanned by the now all-too-rare study of Australian history at year 12 level. Travel, both within and outside Australia, together with membership of the National Trust augmented this interest.

And what about gardening?

I had inherited an interest in gardens and plants from my mother, both in my parents' suburban garden and tagging along at the Brighton Horticultural Society's flower shows. My first modest house came with a magnificent espaliered Satsuma plum; my first planting was the fashionable *Grevillea* 'Robin Gordon'.

Was there a gardening turning point for you?

The strongest strand in developing my interest in garden history is Fran – her plant knowledge and wide reading on this and associated subjects continue to nourish my own interest.

Our interest in gardens really blossomed in 1984 with the purchase of our current home, a Victorian block-fronted weatherboard house in Hawthorn (Melbourne) which came complete with cottage garden (with no historic content), much admired by passers-by but not by us. Countless hours were spent removing great swathes of ivy, bamboo, solidago (golden rod) and *Salvia uliginosa* (bog sage). Steadily Fran remodelled the garden, removing trees, scraggly shrubs and intrusive thugs, installing a herb bed and Victorian-style garden shed.

Our garden was an early participant in the Victorian Open Garden Scheme, but has never since seen the tidiness one expects from such a garden.

While we have endeavoured to retain the historic integrity of the house, the design in the front continued to annoy Fran. We have now taken the plunge and reinstated the original 1888 design, having first removed all plants before the contractors arrived. The new planting is about to begin.

Do you get to see many other gardens?

We have always enjoyed viewing gardens, becoming almost fanatical in Victoria's sesquicentennial year (1985),

when a phenomenal array of gardens was open to the public at large.

Amongst those visited were a number of historic gardens on a grand scale, such as Mawallock and Banongil in the Western District, Murrundindi Station and Delatite in the north east and Dreamthorpe at Macedon.

Any other interests?

Our interest in the outdoors goes well beyond gardens. We both enjoy bushwalking and bush camping. I'm a keen recreational cyclist, who likes nothing better than a scenic club ride in the countryside, usually 100kms. I retired from cricket, having hooked a ball into my face a la Bob Hawke (and in the same year). I am a keen supporter of the Saints in Australian football, the beautiful game (this used to take me outdoors, but now they play indoors). As a jogger, I developed a detailed knowledge of our area. We now get this together with our regular morning walks. In earlier years (pre marriage), I enjoyed the landscape of a wide variety of golf courses.

Our membership of the AGHS has been not just to learn more about our garden history, but also to encourage those who willingly bear the burden of maintaining historic gardens.

Victoria's oldest apple tree?

On the eastern bank of the Plenty River at Greensborough, Melbourne, stands a solitary apple tree referred to as the Batman Apple Tree. The story behind it is both fascinating and of historical interest. The tree, once part of an orchard planted by Frederick Flintoff, is on a small river flat, adjacent to the Maroondah aqueduct pipe crossing. Nearby is a plaque marking the site of a private cemetery for the pioneer Whatmough and Partington families.

The 1841 census reported the presence of Frederick Nevin Flintoff on the Plenty at Greensborough. An unfinished and uninhabited wood house stood on his property, which was given the name Brancepeth. In 1890, Brancepeth Farm comprised 200 acres owned by Mr. F. Flintoff jnr., with "the garden in the valley and the farm on top of the hill". The orchard of "some seven acres" planted along the river banks was for many years leased by Mr Whatmough. Considered one of the oldest in the district, the orchard at this time had "the appearance of being worn out".

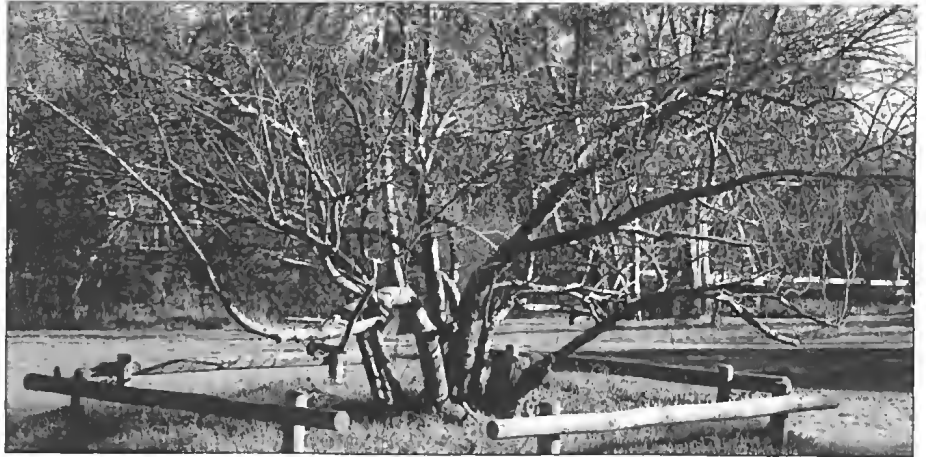
The following account of a conversation between the writer and Mr. T. Flintoff comes from *The Evelyn Observer* of February 1890. "It appears the majority of trees in the garden were, in the first place, brought over from Van Diemen's Land by Mr John Batman and planted in his garden at the Survey Camp ... After Batman's death, the trees were sold, and in September 1841 Mr Flintoff bought a number at one pound a piece and brought them to and planted them in the Greensborough district; a few years after they were transplanted to the garden in question and have remained there ever since."

Mr. Carr who "had leased the orchard" for the last 10 or 11 years showed the writer an underground cellar (a drive in the side of the hill) for storing fruit.

An account of the origin of the tree, recorded by Edward E. Pescott in *The Victorian Naturalist* of June 1942, is based on his 1933 conversation with

Known as Batman's Apple Tree, this productive oldtimer is said to have links with Melbourne's colourful founder.

BRUCE G DRAPER reports.



Flintoff's daughter. Her story was that Flintoff ordered his bailiff, Batey, to plant the tree as a memorial to his friend Batman.

In 1910, E.E. Pescott, then Principal of Burnley Horticultural College, recommended to the then owner of the orchard, Mr. J.A. Bosch, that the tree be grafted over with strong growing varieties, and also that crevices in the trunk be filled with cement. This he did. The tree was grafted over with the Rome Beauty and Rymer varieties.

An article in *The Leader* of November 22, 1913, under the heading "Making good on a small acreage" describes a visit to the six-acre garden of Mr. J.A. Bosch of Greensborough. "When Mr. Bosch came into possession, some 15 years ago, there was an old orchard on the place which had never done any good, and he was advised not to attempt fruit growing, but out came a lot of the old trees and in went a much larger acreage of new ones, principally apples and peaches." The apple varieties were mainly Rome Beauty, Rymer and Jonathan – "Among the younger trees is an old veteran, sole survivor of the original orchard. It was a Rymer apple, but has recently been cut back and grafted to Rome Beauty."

W.A. (Bill) Rolfe, Senior Horticultural Adviser with the Department of Agriculture, wrote in the *Victorian Horticulture Digest* in 1966: "An examination of the wood suggests that part of the tree is Rymer and another part, which appears to come from a growth below the original graft, possibly Winter Majetin." The Winter Majetin variety is a Norfolk apple dating back to 1820. Today a block of cement inscribed with the date 1841 stands alongside the trunk.

A number of legends have grown up about the tree's origin. The account by T. Flintoff to the writer of sketches "In and around the valley of the Diamond Creek", published in *The Evelyn Observer* in 1890, is probably the most reliable. John Batman died on 6 May 1839. A fruit tree nursery or small fruit garden was often established while orchard land was being cleared and prepared for cultivation. Successive plantings would then take place to establish a new orchard. The Flintoff orchard likely started in 1841 with the planting of trees, once a part of John Batman's fruit garden. The sole survivor of that orchard is said to be one of the original Batman apple trees, which would likely make it the oldest living apple tree in Victoria.

For the bookshelf

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO THE GARDEN

Edited by Patrick Taylor
Oxford University Press)
ISBN 0-19-866255-6
978-0-19-866255-6
RRP: \$130

Reviewed by Tony Fawcett



It is described as “sumptuous” and that is fitting description indeed for this 554-page, 1,750-listing, lavishly illustrated guide to world gardening, from ancient to avant garde. Planned by a team of international advisers using contributions from top gardening writers from 25 countries, including the AGHS’s own Christine Reid, it looks at more than 1,000 international gardens, garden identities and garden-related subjects in an A-Z format.

The fun part for keen travellers is spotting and reading about the gardens you’ve visited – and for those planning trips with gardens in mind, it would be an invaluable pre-departure resource, although it’s way too hefty a tome to stow in your luggage.

The writing is both authoritative and at times entertaining and for the garden

historian it would be a must to have on the bookshelf.

Definitely one worth treating yourself to for Christmas.

TULIPS – SPECIES AND HYBRIDS FOR THE GARDEN

Richard Wilford
Timber Press
ISBN 978-0-88192-763-4
RRP: \$59.95

Reviewed by Trevor Nottle

This book will be welcomed by gardeners who want to know more about and understand the cultivation of tulips, the species tulips in particular, for these are the way forward in garden making in warm, dry climates where the big Dutch hybrids prove so frustratingly transient. It is a doubly frustrating realisation that these glorious hybrids are the descendants of wild tulips that grow naturally in places where the summers are long, hot and dry. Winters may be colder but the want of cold in more ‘Mediterranean’ climates doesn’t appear to preclude flowering. While many will be familiar with the more readily available species – *saxialis*, *clusiana*, *sylvestris*, *greigii*, *tarda* and *orphanidea* – there remains a large number of species and selected forms that have barely been noticed by gardeners.

Wilford’s book provides a most welcome introduction to the genus *Tulipa* which quite rightly places emphasis on the species and follows up with a brief survey of the hybrid tulips. They have been given sufficient prominence elsewhere. Wilford succinctly conflates the plethora of diverse botanical opinions of modern students of the genus to deliver a satisfying overview of the genus followed by an alphabetical survey. The perspectives of experts

and others are covered and neatly dealt with thus rendering the extremely complex views of ‘splitters’ vs ‘lumpers’ comprehensible but not over simplified.

THE ECOLOGIES OF PARADISE: EXPLAINING THE GARDEN NEXT DOOR

J. B. Kirkpatrick
Pandani Press (03 6225 1956)
635.091732
RRP: \$35

Reviewed by Tony Fawcett

A profile of the Tasmanian-based author on the internet pretty much sums up where this delightful little book is coming from. “I am interested in any research that helps the conservation of nature, or amuses me,” writes Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick of himself.

A look at gardens and what they say about us, it is a book of social commentary, garden history, folksy reminiscences and a call for better garden practices all rolled into one. One minute he can be writing about selecting the right tree for your garden or why humus is the garden god and the next about the fact that David Bowie was one of the first to have his hair cut in the mullet style.

It’s this quirky, free-wheeling approach that makes it so appealing, the perfect offering to dip into for a few pages over breakfast each morning.

Diary dates

SEPTEMBER

17 Sunday

South Australia, Adelaide
2:00 pm – Garden visit to Uplands, 14 Benjamin Way, Mount Barker, with talk by owner Ruth Vasey. RSVP Lynn Hillier

19 Tuesday

New South Wales, Sydney
Book treasures & conservation day: Library of Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, (6.00 pm for 6.30pm). Librarian Miguel Garcia showcases library holdings and Branch's conservation project to repair rare and valuable garden history books. Members \$10/guests \$12. Bookings: Peter Cousens 9550 3809, petercousens@bigpond.com

23 Saturday

Tasmania, Portville
Visit to historic property of Marlbrook with colonial –Georgian style house within framework of mature trees, a beautiful formal garden of drought and frost-resistant plants.

OCTOBER

7 Saturday

Queensland, Brisbane
Visit to remnant beachfront rainforest at Narrowneck & Gold Coast Botanic Garden guided by one of our members, Kate Heffernan.

8 Sunday

Western Australia
Day visit to Toodyay. Contact: Sue Monger 9384 1575 susanmonger@yahoo.com.au.

14 Saturday

New South Wales, Sydney
Tour of Chinese Gardens, Darling Harbour, at 10am followed by optional yum cha at a venue close by. Members \$15/guests \$20 Details/bookings: Jan Gluskie 9428 5947 jangluskie@ihug.com.au

20-22 Friday-Sunday

South Australia, Adelaide
27th Annual AGHS National Conference – Adelaide's Botanical Riches: keeping history in garden design, the Wine Centre. Register early.

29 Sunday

New South Wales, Sydney
Hunters Hill Garden tour. Noted 'garden suburb' on a peninsula in Sydney Harbour, this cul-de-sac is rich in large and diverse gardens, trees and old sandstone homes and churches.

29 Sunday

Southern Highlands, Goulburn
A visit to historic Kippilaw, plus two more significant properties. Details to be confirmed.

31 Tuesday

Victoria, Melbourne
Joint Lecture with Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Richard Aitken speaks about his latest book Botanic Riches. Details from Pamela Jellie: pdjellie@hotmail.com

NOVEMBER

4-7 Saturday-Tuesday

Victoria, Melbourne
Edward La Trobe Bateman-themed tour of Western District with visits to Chatsworth House, The Gums, Kolor & other properties. Bookings: kwright1@bigpond.com.

10, 11, 12 Friday-Sunday

New South Wales, Orange
A weekend tour to Orange and surrounds. Details to follow.

11-12 Saturday-Sunday

Tasmania, Chudleigh Valley
Weekend in historic Chudleigh Valley. Lecture and tour by John Hawkins, "History of European settlement from Deloraine westward as a result of Van Diemen's Land Company Grant at Woolnorth in 1826". Visit historic properties, Wychwood Nursery, native-plant garden in the Western Tiers and Alum Cliffs.

12 Sunday

South Australia, Adelaide
Garden visit to The Oaks, Alston Road, Blakiston (2pm start). The Oaks is the subject of the owner Christine McCabe's book on gardening in the Adelaide Hills. Afternoon tea served. RSVP Lyn Hillier

14 Saturday

New South Wales, Sydney
Tour of Chinese Gardens, Darling

Harbour, at 10am followed by optional yum cha at a venue close by. Members: \$10. Guests: \$12. Details/bookings:

Jan Gluskie 9428 5947
jangluskie@ihug.com.au

19 Sunday

New South Wales, Central Coast
Self-drive garden tour of Kulnura area & visit to garden of designer/plantsman Michael Cooke's garden, Hawthorn Stud and Bob & AGHS member Derelie Cherry's nursery – Paradise Plants. BYO picnic lunch. Members \$15/guests \$20 Details/bookings: Jeanne Villani 9997 5995, Jeanne@Villani.com

25 Saturday
Queensland, Brisbane
Christmas event at the home of member Kate Heffernan. Details to follow.

DECEMBER

3 Sunday

New South Wales, Sydney
Christmas Party (5pm-8pm) at Peter Chapman's home, Edensor at Cheltenham, plus visit to Open Garden Scheme garden The Briers, Wahroonga.

Members \$15/guests \$20
Bookings: Murray Hook, 9484 3676, mhook@bigpond.net.au

Western Australia

Christmas party at Ros & Max Stewart's garden in Codbinia. Contact: Sue Monger 9384 1575 susanmonger@yahoo.com.au.

Southern Highlands, Mittagong
Christmas drinks in the fascinating garden of Taliesin. Details to follow.

6 Wednesday

Victoria, Melbourne
'Exploring the Golf Links Estate in Camberwell'. Michael Humphries leads tour around this interesting estate developed between the wars. More later.

10 Sunday

South Australia
Christmas drinks at 5pm at Marilyn Kuchel's, 50 Old Carey Gully Road, Stirling, Bring a plate of festive fare, drinks provided. RSVP Lyn Hillier



AGM notice

The 26th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society Inc., will be held on Saturday 21 October 2006 at 8.30am at the National Wine Centre, cnr Hackney and Botanic Roads, Adelaide.

There will be two vacancies on the National Management Committee this year. If nominations exceed the number of vacancies, ballot papers will be enclosed in this Journal

Victoria's working bees

● Third Wednesday of each month: Bishopscourt 120 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne.

● OCTOBER 7 Saturday
Birregurra Working bee – Turkeith (Vicroads 92 6E)
Contact for all: Helen Page helenpage@bigpond.com

Parliament gardens set to open

On Sunday, 29th October, as part of the Parliament of Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations, Parliament House in Melbourne will open its heritage-listed gardens for members of the public to wander through on self-guided tours.

Around & about

Griffins online

In their 20-year stay in Australia (1914-1935) Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion (pictured below), produced more than 250 designs, including that for Canberra. So it seems fitting they now have a website devoted to their creativity and their Australian body of work. It is www.griffinsociety.org.

As www.griffinsociety.org reveals, the Griffins' time in Australia produced everything from several towns and suburban garden estates to a university college, cinemas, theatres, industrial and commercial buildings, domestic houses, furniture and interiors.

The site has been put together by the Walter Burley Griffin Society, operating since 1988 as a non-profit association inspired by the need to commemorate and promote a better understanding of the lives, ideals, vision and works of the creative pair who left such a vast legacy to Australia.



LEFT: Photographer Rowland Herbert, late 1920s. L to R Louise Lightfoot, a delineator in the Griffins' office, Marion Mahony Griffin, Walter Burley Griffin and his father George Walter Griffin outside the Grant House, Castlecrag.

A growing history

George Jones from Geelong forwarded this photograph (right) from a private album. It was one of five taken on a visit to the Geelong Botanic Gardens in either 1927 or 1928 as the next page in the album had photos of aviator Bert Hinkler at the Belmont Common. Hinkler had flown solo from Britain in 1928, supporting the dating of the palm photo.

George continues: "I later realised the palm is the renowned Chilean wine palm, *Jubaea chilensis*, that appeared on the jacket of my book *Growing Together*. This identification is confirmed by the paths and, in the foreground, rock edging of a garden bed. These are still in place although the rocks have become worn during the nearly 80 years since the photograph was taken."

The palm was then magnificent but not yet stately as it is today. It had been planted about 1867 during the term of the first curator, Daniel Bunce. No wonder the Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens adopted it as their logo.



Picture: Tony Fawcett

Smell the heritage roses

If old roses appeal, then not to be missed is the Australian Heritage Rose Conference being held at the Abbey Beach Resort in Busselton, WA, from November 9 to 12. For details, email bjbwaconf@highway1.com.au or visit www.heritage.rose.org.au. The subject is 'the Chinese Connection' and roses that perform well in Australia's warm, dry climate. Included will be talks by Australian and overseas experts and afternoon garden visits.

Packers' patch

Thanks to Nina Crone, Fran Faul, Di Ellerton, Mary Chapman, Sandy Pullman, Ann Miller, John and Sandra Torpey, Kathy Wright, Elizabeth Wright, Jane Johnson and Laura Lewis for their hard work in packing the last issue of the journal.



ANOTHER HISTORIC GARDEN SAVED

Melbourne now has another historic garden to visit. It is the garden of the The Abbotsford Convent, site of major controversy in the 1990s but now under the control of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation after a seven-year community campaign to protect the 11 historic buildings and 6.8ha of grounds.

The garden has recently undergone major changes and restoration work under the guidance of heritage garden specialist Pamela Jellie.

When the Abbotsford Convent Foundation first took possession of the site, it was totally overgrown with weeds and blackberries. A team of dedicated volunteers and a Green Corps program helped to transform the gardens, which date from around 1902.

Pamela Jellie and the small team of volunteers are now working toward returning it to the state it would have been around 1963.



The most structured part of the property is the heritage-listed formal garden, dating from around 1902. This retains elements



from an even earlier Abbotsford House garden, including two oaks (*Quercus ilex* or holm oak) and *Quercus robur* (English oak). The garden structure has survived almost intact with the rotunda, rock edging to the beds, many fine old trees and original encircling hedges still evident.

The design is reminiscent of the naturalistic style popular at the time in England and Australia and seen in Guilfoyle's layout of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. The perimeter path offers a series of controlled views and surprise vistas. Early photographs show many upright conifers such as the Italian cypress, as well as many radiata pines, Chinese fan palms and Canary Island palms. These, together with olives, peppercorns and oaks, appear to have formed the basis of the tree collection through which the garden walk winds. While some trees would have been present before the

Sisters of the Good Shepherd acquired it, it is likely subsequent plantings had religious significance.

There are a number of trees of cultural significance, including a silky oak, a common alder, a white poplar, and a honey locust.

An English oak is thought to have been planted by Edward Curr, known as 'The Father of Separation', as early as 1850 in the garden of the original St Heliers House. This tree could be regarded as Victoria's Separation Tree and is included on the National Trust's Register of Significant Trees. In a protected environment, it has retained its natural form of low sweeping branches. Here also are rare cork oaks and poplar and elm avenues. The area south of the convent, down to the Yarra River, was originally used by the Sisters as extensive market gardens and vegetable plots.

Both the Convent and its surrounds are of national heritage significance due to their historic, landscape and architectural values and are recorded on the Register of the National Estate and the Victorian Heritage Register and are classified by the National Trust Australia (Vic).

Lemon-scented celebration

Treeplanting has figured prominently in the AGHS's 25th birthday year. The Western Australian branch did its digging and celebrating with a *Corymbia ficifolia* being planted by John Viska (1988 founding chairman and long-standing committee member) at Woodbridge House, West Midland.

The occasion (pictured right) was a meeting of Friends of Woodbridge, a group of dedicated volunteers who maintain the house and gardens, at which Carol Mansfield, an AGHS member and local historian, spoke about Charles Harper who built the house and operated Harper's Woodbridge Nurseries.

